

Mr. Speaker, these stories serve as a wakeup call for change, or we can continue the same policies that have led us to this direction and this place. America can do better. We need new priorities. In the spirit of Edward R. Murrow, "Good day, and good luck."

THE CROPS WERE IN THE FIELDS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, when the relentless rain and howling winds of Hurricane Rita hit southeast Texas, the agriculture industry took a beating. Texas rice farmers were already having a tough year because of unpredictable weather, increased fuel and fertilizer costs, and the last thing they needed was a visit from the lady of the gulf. Rita's wrath ravaged rice fields and caused power outages in the mills where harvested rice was being dried. The crops in the field just weeks away from the second harvest took a beating.

Bill Dishman, Jr., a rice farmer in my district, owns a farm in the small town of China, Texas. He figures about one-fourth or more of his second crop, that is the one rice farmers count on to make a profit, was lost. Almost every southeast Texas rice farmer suffered damages from this storm.

Following the storm, I had the opportunity to travel to southeast Texas with Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns and assess the damage and speak to the local rice farmers. Their concerns were serious and their outlook was grim. Texas rice farmers like Bill Dishman and Ray Stoesser need to remain on their combines and the rice needs to grow more, and we need more markets like Cuba. These are tense and troubling times. The American rice farmer, Mr. Speaker, is becoming an endangered species.

REPUBLICAN CORRUPTION AND EXTREME BUDGET CUTS

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, this morning I note that Republicans in Congress have created a culture of corruption and cronyism at the expense of the American public. Instead of helping our senior citizens, students, veterans, and working families that are struggling every single day and see high prices at the gas station and high home heating costs, Republicans are demanding an additional \$15 billion in cuts for a budget reconciliation plan. Republicans I understand want to cut the Federal low income heating program known as LIHEAP at a time when families are expected to pay double and triple compared to last year's heating home costs.

Republicans also plan to cut Medicaid and Medicare at a time when the

number of people without health insurance has grown to 5 million people in 4 years. Republicans plan to cut higher education when we know that the cost of education and to send our kids to college is more than 20 percent higher than it was a few years ago. Republicans are demanding all these drastic cuts to help pay for the reconstruction of Katrina.

Why aren't we asking the wealthiest people in the country who have been given tax credits and giveaways and somehow make them accountable to help with this?

MORGAN MATLOCK

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the selection of former Lamesa resident Ms. Morgan Matlock as Miss Texas 2005. She will represent the State of Texas in the 2005 Miss America Pageant.

Although she currently resides in Fort Worth, Texas, Ms. Matlock was born in Lamesa and hails from a long line of Dawson County residents. Morgan is a talented and dedicated young woman and is active in public service. She is a National Task Force leader for the Words Can Heal organization, and she will use her opportunity as Miss Texas to promote putting an end to verbal abuse. She also founded the Hearts Across Texas, a motivational organization for students from kindergarten to 12th grade as a staff member and columnist for Teen Scene and Pageantry Magazine, and a member of the Colleyville Chamber of Commerce.

The Texas values that she has exhibited throughout her community service and career in pageantry are honorable. It is my great privilege to represent her here in Washington. She is a bright example of the difference that one can make when civically oriented. I would like to wish Morgan good luck in the Miss America Pageant and in all her future endeavors. She has made not only District 11 proud, but all of Texas.

REGARDING AMBASSADOR JOE WILSON

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, Mark Twain once observed that mankind is the only species that feels shame or needs to. That thought crossed my mind when I was reading about this corrupt effort to punish Ambassador Joe Wilson who told the truth and blew the whistle on the administration's misinformation about the Iraq war. Apparently in the grand jury testimony Judith Miller said, "She agreed to Libby's request to be cited in stories as a 'former Hill staffer,' a rather deceptive description for the Vice President's Chief of Staff."

Well, the Los Angeles Times got it right. It was deceptive, and there was a

reason. Anyone who would participate in any way to punish an American for blowing the whistle on the President's misstatements should feel shame. Obviously, Mr. Libby did feel shame and that is why he hid from the public, or attempted to, that he was actually part of the administration that attempted to punish an American for telling the truth.

We should not wait for the grand jury. This President should root out the corruption and discharge the people responsible for these misdeeds.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the SPDC rules Burma with an iron fist. It has prevented the democratically elected leader of the nation from taking power, and nearly 1 million people have been driven from their homes and now live in the jungles hunted like animals by the SPDC military. They are called IDPs, internally displaced people.

I say to the people of Burma: Other human rights issues may get the headlines, but you are not forgotten. We stand with you. We will continue to work with you for as long as it takes to ensure that the people of your nation are able to live in peace and freedom.

On September 21, Assistant Secretary of State Eric John said that the Bush administration led by Ambassador John Bolton will put Burma on the Security Council agenda this month.

This is an important step towards resolving the tragedy in Burma and calling on the SPDC to account for its atrocities. Seventeen years after the formation of the Burma's main opposition party, the NLD, the U.N. is waking up and taking notice of the plight of the Burmese people. I hope the U.N. will act.

CALLING FOR INDEPENDENT COMMISSION REGARDING HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, Americans were shocked by our government's response to Hurricane Katrina. They watched as days passed before the people of the gulf coast communities were rescued. Americans rightly wondered, given this poor response to a natural disaster, is our government ready to respond to a terrorist attack?

Americans now deserve the answers, and I believe those answers can best come from an independent commission to both identify what went wrong but, more importantly, to find solutions so that this failed response never happens again.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress shares with the current administration a

weak reputation for oversight. We need only to look back a couple of years to be reminded that it was not Congress nor the White House who demanded an appropriate oversight of 9/11 attacks. Members on the 9/11 Commission have acknowledged it was the families of those lost in the attacks that came to Washington and demanded a thorough review of what went wrong.

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Mr. Speaker, do we intend to wait for the people of Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas to march to the Capitol and demand that their administration and their Congress do the right thing and create an independent commission to find out truly how we can best respond in the future?

WISHING NATIONAL REVIEW AND WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY HAPPY BIRTHDAY

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago a new periodical entered the marketplace in American history. That publication was National Review. Its founder and editor was 29-year-old William F. Buckley. From the beginning, Buckley's magazine stood "athwart history, yelling 'Stop,' at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urged it."

And for 5 decades, it has bravely and effectively espoused conservative values and ideas, with both humor and intelligence. It is no surprise that since its inception, we have seen widespread acceptance of conservative principles like economic freedom, individual responsibility, and traditional values.

Buckley and National Review did much more than "stand athwart history." They helped shape it and America and the world are better for it. I offer a most sincere happy birthday to William Buckley and thank him for his wonderful creation, and I congratulate the family at National Review for 50 years of fine work with hopefully many more years to come.

REPUBLICANS CUT IMPORTANT PROGRAMS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this week House Republicans plan to move ahead with drastic cuts to domestic programs. Republicans say the cuts are necessary to help fund the reconstruction of the gulf coast after Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Speaker, the programs House Republicans plan to cut this week are the very ones that have helped Americans in the gulf coast begin to pick up the pieces after losing their homes and

their jobs. Imagine being injured during the hurricane and not having any access to health coverage because your job simply no longer exists.

The Federal Medicaid program has helped thousands of gulf coast residents with their health care bills over the last month. Now House Republicans are demanding that we cut Medicaid services. I know Republicans will say we need to make these cuts to address the deficit they created; but if Republicans really wanted to address the budget deficit, they would revisit their giant tax breaks for America's millionaires.

We are really helping the wealthiest elite in our Nation when there are so many people struggling from Hurricane Katrina. I cannot believe that the Republican answer to Hurricane Katrina is to cut the programs for the poor.

SPENDING REDUCTIONS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, this morning Congress Daily ran a story, "House GOP drops plans for across-the-board spending cuts." At first glance, I was disappointed.

I have authored bills with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) to offer across-the-board cuts because they work, and I believe we should have the courage to enact them. But I also know that those across the aisle favor massive spending and absolutely cannot stand across-the-board cuts. And while I am disappointed that we will not take that approach of across-the-board cuts, I am not going to give up on seeing major spending reductions.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the House Republican majority is going to find savings in our spending one way or another, despite opposition from the big spenders.

I want to thank the leadership for making it clear that we expect to see \$50 billion in entitlement reductions. It is great progress. While Republicans debate how do we reduce spending and get it under control, our friends on the other side of the aisle are debating how much more can we spend.

Mr. Speaker, they are out of touch with America, but they can still join us in this effort.

PRAISING IRAQI ELECTIONS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, Saturday was a historic day for democracy in Iraq and a bad day for terrorists. Millions of Iraqis embraced the democratic process and turned out to vote for a new constitution. We will not know the final results until later this

week, but the large turnout of voters and the low level of violence are themselves milestones of progress on Iraq's path to democracy. As Prime Minister Ja'afari said, "The victory for Iraq is that Iraqis are voting."

More than 60 percent of registered voters turned out in the Sunni majority Ninewah Province compared to 17 percent in January's election. The higher turnout is an important change and a tribute to our political strategy which includes continued outreach to Sunni leaders. Additionally, this strong Sunni participation is evidence of a desire on their part to reject insurgent violence and place their trust in the democratic process.

In addition, we know Saturday's violence did not even come close to the 347 election-day attacks reported in the January election.

Mr. Speaker, Saturday's vote took place 3 years to the day following Saddam Hussein's made-up election in which he won 100 percent of the vote. Taking one more step toward democracy, Iraqis now know what a real election is.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, 3 weeks ago I had the opportunity to meet and discuss the situation on our borders with the members of the Minute Men Project. These dedicated individuals reaffirmed my concerns that illegal immigrants are crossing our borders in record numbers. They fear that any amnesty or free citizenship bill will only reward and entice more illegal immigration. I agree.

Therefore, as Congress moves closer to a substantial debate on immigration reform, it is important that we not consider any guest worker or amnesty proposal until the administration makes a concerted effort to secure our borders and enforce our laws and Congress passes legislation that allows local and State officials to act as immigration deputies.

The situation on our border is not pretty, and it is a problem that Congress must not ignore.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for your help to reform and restore accountability to our immigration laws.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later in the day.